



In case you haven't heard, smoking kills millions

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True story. It was recently suggested that I take up smoking.

I guess there are still those who haven't heard that smoking is bad for you. Then again, nothing much surprises me anymore about what people believe.

Sometimes it does seem like all the adults have left the room.

Not trying to be condescending, but I think it's important to make sure everyone understands the risks associated with the use of tobacco in any form.

Cigarettes have been recognized as a primary cause of cancer since the 1940s.

"The cigarette is the deadliest artifact in the history of human civilization," Stanford University professor Robert N. Proctor has noted. "Cigarettes cause about 1.5 million deaths from lung cancer per year."

Companies that stood to lose a lot of money, however, disputed the indisputable findings of the medical community well into the 1970s. Greed is often the enemy of truth.

And don't get me started on second-hand smoke.

"Second-hand smoke causes nearly 34,000 premature deaths from heart disease each year in the United States among nonsmokers," according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. "Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or at work increase their risk of developing heart disease by 25–30 percent."

If you want to kill yourself in the privacy of your own home, go ahead. Just don't do it around me or my family. And this isn't some left-wing, radical assault on your individual freedom. Your rights clearly end where our lungs begin.

It's sad, the arrogance of those who want to rely on their "instincts" or "gut feelings" instead of listening to people who actually know things.

OK. Maybe this stuff was known when the suggestion was made. Regardless, I don't think I'll be buying a pipe anytime soon. So now you know.

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